



Homecoming

*Children, you are very little,
and your bones are very brittle*
— R. L. Stevenson

This bloody place can't hold another scrap.
Already it has had a bellyful.

Where did they go, these wounded,
these clumsy casualties who come back broken?

Across which mine field did they stumble, what
primrose path? What hell?

Who set the booby trap? Damned nightmare.
I sent them from me whole.

With luck, they'll leave this camp with just a limp
brought on by weather. Scars that hardly show.

I move among them dispensing a ration of comfort
one sip at a time,

an old canteen, battered, almost run dry.

ROBIN SUPRANER